

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 05756 041155Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----081017 041204Z /46

O P 041102Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7580
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

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EXDIS

DAMASCUS FOR THE SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)
SUBJECT: ISRAELI SENSITIVITIES

1. EVRON HAS RAISED TWO CONCERNS WITH ME WHICH HE SAID
BOTH REFLECT CONCERNS OF BEGIN AND DAYAN AS WELL.

2. ONE WAS THE QUESTION TRIGGERED BY A NUMBER OF PRESS
STORIES HERE AS TO WHETHER THE SECRETARY MIGHT BE
PLANNING SOME MEETING WITH WEST BANK OFFICIALS DURING
HIS VISIT. (THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF PRESS SPECULATION
ABOUT SUCH A POSSIBLE MEETING.) I TOLD EVRON HE COULD
ASSURE THE MINISTERS THAT NO SUCH MEETINGS WERE PLANNED
OR WOULD TAKE PLACE. WE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD
SOME SORT OF DOCUMENT BE PRESENTED BY WEST BANK OFFICIALS,
AS HAS BEEN WIDELY RUMORED, THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM
IN ITS BEING ACCEPTED.

3. THE PRACTICE OF ALL PAST VISITS HAS BEEN FOR CONSUL
GENERAL NEWLIN TO GREET THE SECRETARY ALONG WITH THE
MANAGER OF THE KING DAVID HOTEL JUST INSIDE THE DOOR
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ON HIS ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM. (APPARENTLY THIS RESULTED
IN A PHOTOGRAPH IN FEBRUARY IN ONE OF THE ISRAELI PAPERS
OF THE SECRETARY, FOREIGN MINISTER ALON, AND NEWLIN
TOGETHER.) EVRON SAYS THAT NOT ONLY HE BUT ALSO BEGIN
AND DAYAN ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS PRACTICE EVEN THOUGH
THEY RECOGNIZE IT HAS BEEN FOLLOWED IN THE PWST, AND
THAT IN THEIR VIEW SINCE NEWLIN HAS NO OFFICIAL STATUS

RECOGNIZED BY THE GOI, IT IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO BE RECEIVING THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE SECRETARY AT THE HOTEL. HE HAD SUGGESTED AS AN ALTERNATIVE THAT NEWLIN MIGHT AWAIT THE SECRETARY AT HIS SUITE. I HAVE URGED THE ARGUMENT THAT WE SHOULD FOLLOW PAST PRACTICES AND NOT DISTURB THE "STATUS QUO" AT THIS TIME. EVRON HAS GRUMBLINGLY AGREED NOT TO MAKE "AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT OUT OF IT," BUT ASKS SPECIFICALLY THAT THE SECRETARY BE AWARE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS. I ASSURED EVRON THAT NEWLIN WAS NOT PLANNING TO PUSH HIMSELF FORWARD OR TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF HIS ROLE; EVRON SAID HE HOPED NEWLIN WOULD KEEP AS LOW A PROFILE AS POSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE ANOMALOUS SITUATION HIS PRESENCE PRESENTED.

4. COMMENT: I UNDERSTAND THIS IS AN OLD STORY AND THAT EVRON IN PARTICULAR HAS RAISED IT AND OTHER SUCH SYMBOLIC ISSUES REPEATEDLY IN THE PAST BUT WE HAVE ALWAYS STUCK TO OUR GUNS. THIS, OF COURSE, WILL BE THE FIRST VISIT HERE WITH THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE, AND WHATEVER HAPPENS ON THIS VISIT SETS A PRECEDENT FOR THE FUTURE. JUST HOW STRONGLY BEGIN AND DAYAN THEMSELVES FEEL, I CANNOT TELL, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THEY MAY MENTION IT OR SOME OTHER ASPECT OF THE CONSULATES POSITION DURING THE VISIT. IF WE SHOULD TAKE ANY POSITION OTHER THAN THE ONE I HAVE TAKEN, PLEASE ADVISE

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IMMEDIATELY.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 22 May 2009
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV05756
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770279-0662
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770895/aaaaddag.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1705516
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI SENSITIVITIES
TAGS: OVIP, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: DAMASCUS
Type: TE
vdkgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fa0e7061-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009